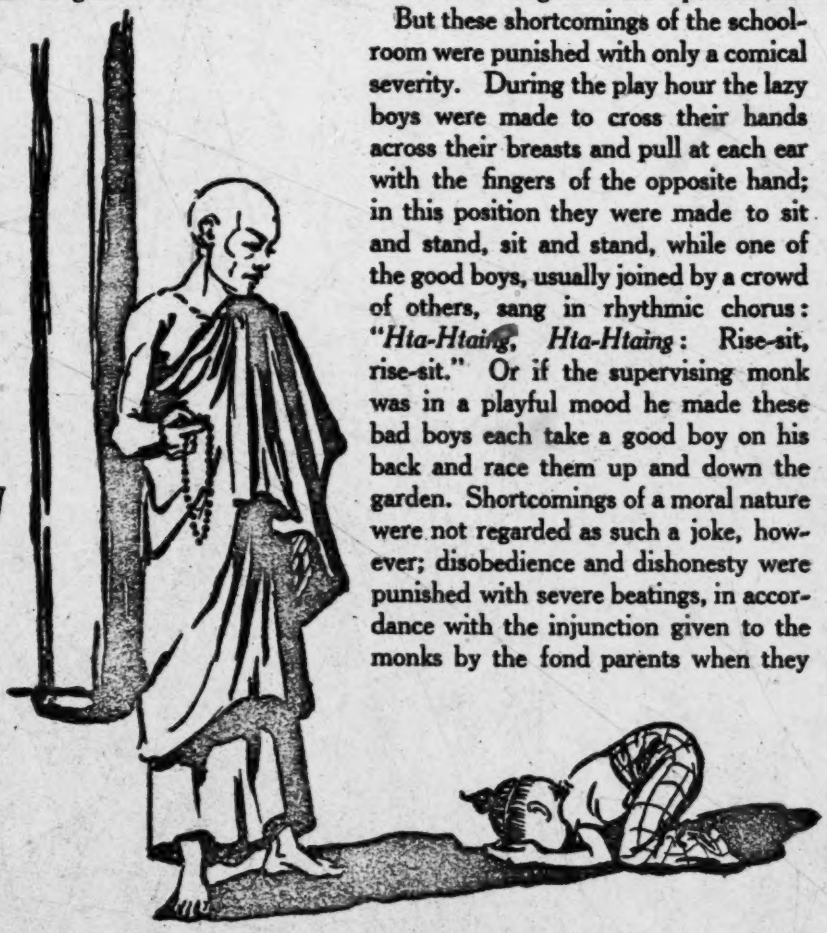
"Your holiness" and themselves as "Your holiness' pupil". The monks addressed the people as *daga*, giver, for they lived by the gifts of the people who donated robes, household articles and other necessities to the monasteries, as good works which brought them merit.

When my grandparents took my father to the kyaung he was a frightened little boy dressed in a cotton skirt called a *longyi*, and a shirt without cuffs and collar; his hair was grown long in the centre and tied in a knot, the sides being cut in a fringe about two inches long all round, and the rest shaved clean, a way of growing hair common to both little boys and girls and enhancing their youthful appearance. He and all the other scholars performed the domestic tasks of the monastery, swept and rubbed the good hard wooden floors, the monastery grounds and pagoda steps, because in these precincts all comers went barefoot; they drew water for drinking, and for the bath of the older monks; they followed the monks on their rounds, two of them bearing a pole on which was slung a covered tray, to take any food donated in excess of what would go into the monk's bowl; they waited on the monks at meals; they learned to read and write, and do simple sums, to recite precepts and religious passages which they shouted at the tops of their childish voices in imitation of the deep intoning voice of the teacher monk, phrase by phrase; in the evenings they went home to eat the meal which the monks abstained from, but came back at sunset to recite the lessons of the day and many past days all over again, to join in the assembled night prayers, to sleep in the monastery and rise again before dawn.

When my father spoke to us of his years in the monastery he always chuckled with delight, in spite of this long list of disciplined tasks. He had the advantage from the first; he was stronger and taller than other boys, and in a system where all learning was by heart he had brilliant memorising powers. The school-room of the kyaung had not the formal atmosphere of the Western school-room with each child at a desk and chair, and a silence except for the voice of teacher or child. The monastery boys all went into the same big room of the monastery, irrespective of age or stage, each with his slate or book, got down on the floor

872 next to their friends, crouched over their work and started to shout out
854 whatever passage was being committed to memory. My father's chuckling
876 was at being able to remember how his voice was lustier than his rival's as he rested on his elbows and knees, and rocked backwards and forwards in rhythm to his chanting, with his legs going as high as he dared, giving surreptitious kicks and nudges to upset the balance of his similarly rocking rival, shouting out the passages all wrong when the supervising monk was at the other end of the room and could not distinguish his voice in the general din, so as to cause his rival to laugh and be reprimanded.



But these shortcomings of the schoolroom were punished with only a comical severity. During the play hour the lazy boys were made to cross their hands across their breasts and pull at each ear with the fingers of the opposite hand; in this position they were made to sit and stand, sit and stand, while one of the good boys, usually joined by a crowd of others, sang in rhythmic chorus: "*Hta-Htaing, Hta-Htaing*: Rise-sit, rise-sit." Or if the supervising monk was in a playful mood he made these bad boys each take a good boy on his back and race them up and down the garden. Shortcomings of a moral nature were not regarded as such a joke, however; disobedience and dishonesty were punished with severe beatings, in accordance with the injunction given to the monks by the fond parents when they handed their children over: "*So yin na na yaik pa*: If he is naughty please beat him hard."

[861]

872 My father spent about five years like this. The hair of his top-knot
561 grew longer year by year and it was nearing the time when he should cut
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1: Mi Mi Khaing I-5 (no date) 1946 API Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER THREE

MY mother, as I have said, was the fair young jewel of her father's eye; and my grandfather had flashes of the most radical behaviour. Though he refused to learn English and this irreligious language was never spoken in his house, he suddenly decided to send my mother to learn English, not just as a second language, nor even to spend a few years at a totally English-speaking school—for an accomplishment, as a few other Burmese girls of the time did—but to study seriously until she passed the High School Standard of a European Code school which did all its teaching in English. My mother was thus the first Burmese Buddhist woman to pass the High School Examination in the European Code, and today she can speak faultless English though she never uses it unless necessary, and can even read some of the books of Virginia Woolf, although she does not like them. She and her two young brothers were sent to Moulmein; they stayed at the house of my eldest uncle who had settled there, and my mother attended an American Baptist Mission School. This was just before 1900.

My father, in the meantime, had arrived in Moulmein at the same time as my mother. The world had opened for him suddenly. After the strict and simple life of the monastery he found himself a smart young man with a Western crop and a collared shirt and outer jacket. He carefully put away his mother's ring to be put on again only on his visits back to Ye; he found a big and busy town to range in and no anxious mother waiting at home. I think it was during these years that my father got his love of all the sweet pleasures of life. A non-smoker and a teetotaller, he was one of the most spontaneously happy people. He loved food and many friends, to see young people happy and free from discipline, to spend all his resources in order to create happiness around him; he glorified the ability to think and work quickly and leave the maximum time for eating and laughing.

Particularly in this, Moulmein appealed to him. Having grown up in the monastic system of education by memorizing, he was bewildered at a system which prescribed a whole year of full-day studies for five or six thin text-books. As soon as he could read and understand he committed all his year's text-books to memory within a month, and could not conceive that there was anything else to be learnt unless they prescribed [illegible] books to be memorized. During school hours he wrote an Arith-

metic book for an old man called Samuel who produced a series of swot books on various subjects, beautifully tabulated books with questions and answers, invaluable for examinations and used even in my day when we and our school teachers whisked them out of sight of Education Inspectors who came on the prowl for just such unprogressive methods of education. He also went across to the American Mission School where quite often the teachers were more Christian and painstaking than brilliant, to help old Teacher Nellie with Geometry riders, and in this way he met my mother.

My parents could not get married as soon as they left school. My father had first to go to the University, which consisted then of Rangoon College, affiliated to Calcutta University, and then he felt he must work to buy my grandmother a big enough plot of paddy land so that her two youngest sons would not need to look after her in Ye, but could come into the world like my father. He now felt that they should not be denied the wonderful opportunities which he had found. My father did go to College, but had passed only his F. A. (corresponding to Intermediate) when he heard that my mother was now going out to teach in a school at Thaton, and that she was having to put on a European gown and hat in order to be less conspicuous, because at that time no Burmese Buddhist ladies went out to work. My father left his studies at once and got a job in the same school to look after her, and it was only after some months of persuasion by Grandfather and my mother that he consented to leave and look for a better paid position.

He managed to obtain a myookship in the Government Service, which is a junior administrative post but considered a very good job for Burmans in those days. In this job he could save enough to buy Grandmother her paddy land, after which he and my mother would get married. But my father with his good looks, his teetotaller habits, and his myookship, was considered a desirable son-in-law by many people, and other parents were not like Grandfather; they would try to engage the young man's affections for their daughters. I am sure my mother spent the next three years in some anxiety, as she heard stories of the young myook's gay and happy life in such far-off towns as Toungoo and Shwegyin. But one day the children dashed up to her with a telegram; she opened it and read *Gyi will you marry me.* My mother, who has never shown any excitement as far as I can remember, got up very quietly and went to her chest of drawers. She took out ten annas in change, and wired back *Yes.*

Soon after this my father arrived amidst great excitement on the part of my mother's family and a pretence of complete ignorance on Grandfather's part. My aunts expected an explosion from him when

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

and ninepins, played with the big flat seeds of a jungle creeper. Pleasant they were under the shade of the great mango and pipul trees and the lofty cocoa-nut and palmyra palms, and exciting were the games, so that the customary stillness of the place was rudely broken upon by disputing voices, till a monk would come out and bring all back to work again as a penance. Then during the work there was the fun of the writing hour, when everybody had to write out maxims and prayers on his little parabaik with a clumsy pointed steatite pencil. There were always some stiff-fingered big pupils who could not manage to write their copy neatly or correctly, and as punishment had to take the good writers on their backs and march ruefully up and down the long schoolroom during pleasure. Sometimes they were thrashed, but the other punishment was the more dreaded. Then there was the schoolmaster monk, who would tell fairy stories of the other three great islands which lie in the sea round about Myinmo mountain; of the half-moon-faced western islanders, and the wondrous tree that bore everything eatable one could wish for and delivered it ready cooked; the joys of the six heavens of the Nats and the grisly horrors of Nga-yè, with its fearful ages of fantastic punishments. Every now and again travelling necromancers and hmaw sayās would spend a night or two at the monastery, and in recompense for the little delicacies and odds and ends of food which good-natured neophytes would get for them, used to tell stories of witchery and marvel. Sometimes there would be a sā-haw rā, a kind of cyclic poet, who knew half the zats in the language by heart, and would recite a little just for practice. Or a tattooing sayā would come round and mark some particularly favoured youth with a quaint figure. Discussion as to its meaning and probable virtues would be carried on in the shadowy evenings for months afterwards. Varieties of this kind recur to the old Burman as he thinks of the school days long ago, and he sighs with as much conviction as any European that there are no days s happy as the school days.

English rule has disturbed old customs a good deal in the province, but even now we may say that, as an invari-

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

871 able rule, when a boy has reached the age of eight or nine years he goes as a matter of course to the Pôngyi Kyaung. 871 It is open to all alike—to the poor fisherman's son as well 212 as to the scion of princely blood—for no one pays anything, 792 and it is not carefully considered who it is that fills the 561 monkish begging pots in the daily round. Thus every Buddhist boy in the country is taught to read and write, and in this respect at least there are but very few illiterate Burmans. This primary education must by no means be confounded with entry into the monastery as a koyin-gale, or novice. Strictly speaking, this ceremony ought not to take place before the age of fifteen, and the earlier sojourn is only a preparation for it. The younger pupils may become boarders in the monastic building if they choose, but they do not assume the yellow robe, which marks them, for however short a time it may be worn, as members of the Assembly of the Perfect. They wear their ordinary clothes and retain their secular name.

● 876 As soon as the boy enters the monastery he is set down 872 in the big schoolroom beside all the other boys, and receives a roughly-made black wooden slate. On this are written a few of the letters, perhaps the whole of the alphabet. A little explanation starts him off, and for the next few days he is engaged in shouting out their sounds at the top of his voice. Nobody minds him, for all the other scholars are similarly engaged in hallooing, and the monks derive a sense of comfort and a virtuous consciousness of doing good from the noise. It is as soothing as the sound of his mill-wheels to the miller, or the roar of traffic to the cockney. If a boy stops shouting, it is a sign that he has stopped working—and if he is not meditating mischief, it is probable that he is about to go to sleep, and he is corrected accordingly. The method is an admirable one for keeping the boys occupied—much more so than civilised Western methods—though I fear a council of English head-masters would scout the idea. The casual foreign observer who goes about taking notes, like Grose or the "Rampant M.P.," passes the ecclesiastical school, and in amazement at the seeming uproar within, declares that monastery schools are hopelessly badly conducted, and without the semblance of discipline. As a

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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matter of fact, the more noise there is going on, the more work there is being got through.

Doubtless it is a primitive method—doubtless there are thick-headed boys with tough lungs who shout out the ka gyi, ka gwe (the A, B, C) with but the slightest portion of it remaining in their brains. There must be, because sometimes a boy takes a year to get through the alphabet (called the thin-bon-gyi, the "great basket of learning"), the combination of vowel symbols, and the alterations of sound effected by the union of consonants, all of which are mere materials, and only a very small portion of the complicated system of the language. Nevertheless everybody learns in the end, and then they are set to read in the same way, and gradually advance in the immemorial regulation subjects. The first books—all the books, in fact, put in the boys' hands—are religious. They learn the five universal commandments, the five subsidiary rules, the Pali formulæ to be employed at the pagoda—pattering them over till they pour out of the lips with the fluency and precision of water out of a pump. When there are a number at the same stage in their studies, they repeat their lesson word for word after the teacher, sitting in wide rows before him, and all chanting with the same emphasis and apparently in the same key. The effect is very singular when a string of sonorous Pali versicles is being mouthed over in the striking intoned recitative peculiar to these formulæ. The twenty or thirty boys crouching down on their knees, their little heads every now and then bowing down to the ground over their hands joined in supplication, the yellow-robed monk sitting cross-legged on the dais before them, repeating in abrupt, jerky fashion the clauses of the form of worship, which the childish voices instantly catch up, forms a scene which never loses its novelty and attractiveness.

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The little schoolboy slowly learns all these formulæ. Even near to and in the larger towns of Lower Burma the amount of secular learning, arithmetic, and so on that is learnt, is of the most meagre possible description. All relates to the tenets of religion—to the existences and teachings of the Lord Buddha. The things thus impressed on the youthful mind sink deep into the memory, and leave their mark

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2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER LX

THE LANGUAGE

193 194 THE Burmese language is monosyllabic, and is therefore, like all the other monosyllabic languages, forced into the tonic system on account of the limited number of combinations of which the consonants admit. The multitude of meanings which a slight difference of accentuation gives to an otherwise identical sound is the greatest difficulty which a stranger has to contend with in studying the language, and never fails to land the beginner in a most embarrassing maze of complications. The modulations of the voice which European nations employ only to express astonishment, disbelief, interrogation, and alarm, become in Burmese and other Indo-Chinese tongues a means for distinguishing between words of different meaning; and this peculiarity offers particular difficulties to the phlegmatic, monotonous-voiced Englishman. It does not simplify matters that Burmese is, of all these languages, the softest and most pliable, and has therefore received the title of the Italian of the Far East. The varying cadence of the sounds produces to the ear the semblance of a chant, and all the people seem to speak in a kind of rhythm, so that as long as a man has ideas, it is not [543] a very difficult matter to compose linga. But this only [195] renders it more puzzling to the Occidental, and accounts for the fact that very few Englishmen learn Burmese, and still fewer speak it well. Of the mercantile community not one in fifty has any knowledge of Burmese at all; and the civil officers, who have to pass examinations before they get 194 promotion, are but poor hands in conversation. The chief ● 876 reason of this is, of course, that the European is accustomed

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

to learn by the eye, while the Burman learns almost entirely by ear, and the language is correspondingly affected. The semi-civilised man has a gift for catching faint distinctions of sound; and a modulation hardly perceptible to the European is enough to give to the Burman an entirely new meaning to the word. Fortunately the grammar is of the easiest possible character, and there is an extensive written literature, so that recourse may be had to the system of learning by the eye; but this only produces book scholars, and without a knowledge of the pronunciation it is impossible to appreciate the smooth flow of the dramatic metres. Individual sentences, too, may be clear enough, and the immediate connection of subordinate ideas with the leading thought is a great help, but longer compositions can often only be understood by a careful collating of the whole meaning, when once reading aloud would make the whole idea perfectly evident to a Burman.

One of the principal features in the language is the arrangement of words in a sentence, which, as is the case also in Thibetan, is the exact reverse of the order followed in English. This is the more singular and significant to the philologist, because the surrounding Shans, Talaings, and Karens observe practically the same sequence as in English. Another peculiarity is in the nouns, adjectives, and tenses of verbs, which are all formed by the addition of suffixes or affixes to the verbal root. Passive verbs are in very many cases transformed into the active form by the aspiration of the initial consonant, and transitives from intransitives in the same way; as kya-thi, to fall; hkya-thi, to throw down, or cause to fall; pyet-thi, to be ruined; hpyet-thi, to bring to ruin; lut-thi, to be free; hlut-gyi, to set free. The language is written from left to right, and there are no spaces between the words, and but very few paik, or stops, to mark separate sentences, except the paik-gyi which divides paragraphs, and consists of four short perpendicular lines arranged in couples. The written characters are, all but one or two, composed of circles, or segments of circles, having acquired that shape from the original Nagari, by the custom of writing with a pointed style on palm leaves. The alphabet is derived from

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

539 ichneumon, from which you may learn, that although man is superior to all animals, yet kindness shown to them will always meet with its reward.

539 779 876 The following sermon of the Lord Buddha is the chief favourite with the Burmese. In its present form it is said to have been handed down by the favourite disciple, Ananda, who heard it from the lips of Shin Gautama himself. The Mingala-thut is one of the first books the young scholar gets into his hands after he has learnt the ordinary formulæ of worship. There are few Burmans, even in these later days, who cannot repeat the Pali text from end to end.

Mingala-thut, the Buddhist Beatitudes, or Chapter of Blessings

539 Praise be to Buddha the holy, the all-wise.

When the adorable and most excellent Buddha dwelt in the great monastery of Zetawun, built by the rich man Anātabein, in the country of Thawatti, there came to him a déwa at the hour of midnight, when the whole building was illuminated by the effulgence which streamed from his body. The déwa placed himself neither too far nor too near, neither to the right nor to the left, but in the proper spot, and after bowing low in humble obeisance, thus addressed the Buddha:

"Most adorable and excellent Buddha, during twelve long years, many déwas and men, desirous of reaching to the holiness of Ne'ban, have striven to discover what things are blessed, but they still remain in ignorance. Do thou therefore instruct us in those matters which are most blessed."

The Adorable replied:—

"Thou son of déwas, to shun the company of the foolish; to pay homage to the learned; to worship what ought to be worshipped; these are blessed things. Déwa, mark them well.

"Thou son of déwas, to dwell among good men; to have with one's self the conciousness of good deeds done in a former state of existence; to guard well all one's

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

792 871 the small boys, as day pupils. Monastic education is a traditional part of Burmese Buddhism, and almost all the men of Tadagale, whether reared in the village or elsewhere, have attended monastic schools for varying lengths of time.

792 872 876 The monastic school curriculum includes elementary reading, writing and arithmetic, rudiments of history and geography, heavily colored by Burmese cosmology and folklore, and instruction in Buddhist precepts and proper conduct. There is heavy emphasis upon proper conduct. Instruction takes the form of mass recitation and rote memorization. Discipline is strict and the inattentive pupil is kept alert, when necessary, by means of the rod. As indicated earlier, many parents in the village favor the monastic as against the public school because of the strict discipline and the emphasis upon conduct and religion.

793 Concerning the second function of the monks, officiation at certain rites, it should be indicated that because Burmese Buddhism is not a congregational type of religion, the monks are not called upon to officiate at regular assemblies in any fashion akin to the role of the Christian minister. The monks do, however, play an important part in the initiation of boys into the monkhood; and sometimes take part in funeral rites.

The monk's function of giving advice and guidance stems from the fact that he is regarded, in the thinking of the villagers, not only as one to whom the greatest respect and deference is due by virtue of his dedication to his life to religion, but also as a living repository of wisdom and universal knowledge. He is a person to whom one may turn in time of uncertainty, doubt or stress for personal counsel. Problems relating to the conduct of one's children; concern over persistent lack of success in one's economic activities; or even matters of health may be taken to the monk. A great deal of the advice rendered by monks is formulaic, folkloristic and magical in nature. Particular monks tend to acquire reputations as being especially wise and helpful in particular kinds of problems.

792 735 Support of the Monks. The monastery buildings and the land on which they stand are the property of the monastic order, held in perpetuity by grant of the government, free of taxation.

The monks are supported by the donations of the villagers. Every morning a monk, accompanied by one or two monastic school pupils, passes through the village to collect offerings of food. As he enters the compound of each home a member of the household takes a pot of cooked rice, which has been prepared for the morning meal, and places a few large spoonsful in the monk's begging bowl. This minimum daily contribution of food is made by every Buddhist household, without exception; in addition, many families send [624] bowls of curry and rice to the monastery. Giving food to the monks is an important act of merit to Burmese Buddhists. It is regarded as unthinkable that any household would refuse. When the hypothetical case was posed of such a deviant household, villagers agreed that such a family would be severely criticized and shunned in the village.

The few other things that the monks require for their austere existence are given by villagers on the important ceremonial days of the year. These items include robes, soap, matches, begging bowls, water strainers and needles.

796 Duty Days. The Burmese calendar is a lunar one, and in each month there are four days -- duty or sabbath days -- on which the villagers go to the monastery

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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20. TOY CART.

of a savage description. Children have pretty manners; they are respectful to their elders without shyness or cringing.

Children grow up among the implements they will use in after life. Wooden mills for husking rice, tilt-hammers and mortars for pounding, cotton-seeders with geared rollers, spinning-wheels, weaving-looms and other simple machines are in every household; besides agricultural implements, carts and boats, all of which are made or kept in repair by the inmates (*cf.* p. 120). The workshops of artizans of every class are open to view, and the processes are obvious to every passer-by. The interest aroused in children is more diversified than in cold countries with their more secluded life. From mimicking the occupations of adults children learn to take part and soon begin to like a real share in them. Their trade begins with make-believe wares, then come scraps of house and garden produce till it develops into a source of pocket-money and training in business (Nos. 281, 431). The years of tutelage merge into the age of responsibility without abrupt transition. The intelligence which the school-teacher proceeds to build on has insensibly developed under conditions more than commonly favourable, which may help to account for the precocity of Burman school-children under good teaching.

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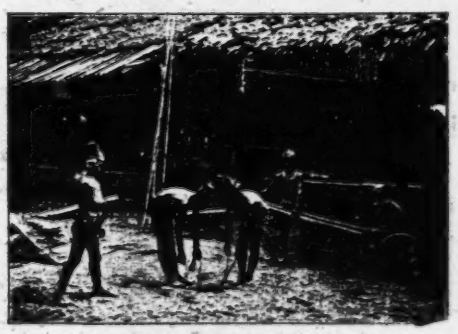

21. PEG-TOPS (DYIN-PAUK).

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From the ages of eight to ten, boys begin attending the school of the Buddhist monastery (*kyaung*), where they are taught free by the recluse (*pôndyí*) or by his sojourner recluses (*upazîn*). The spelling-book is chanted in a chorus led by a senior pupil, and is copied out with a white steatite pencil on a

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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23. MARBLES (GON-HNYIN).

long wooden slate blackened with soot and rice-water (*thun-bôn*). The Burmese word-building is exceedingly regular and in the main phonetic (See appendix B). Reading is acquired in one term, without much effort on the part of pupil or teacher. The Burmans have a pure decimal notation in which the bugbears *eleven* and *twelve* are unrepresented. The Burmese *eleven* is literally "onety-one." Children can count up to hundreds before they come to school and can reckon up sums mentally. In arithmetic they are taught the multiplication-table and a few rules of thumb (*bedin*). In addition to the five Buddhist commandments (p. 16) and the objects of contemplation (p. 43), which the children learn in their homes, they chant passages from the Pâli scriptures in the school chorus and get other precepts by rote: such as the category of duties to parents, teachers and elders, *viz.*, reverence, support, mutual affection (*parâik*). They are taught the value of learning as an inalienable possession, together with many precepts from the *Lawkanîti* and *Mingala-thût*; the conquests of the inner and outer worlds *Atwin-aungdyin*, *Apyin-aungdyin*, the story of the Buddha (see *The Light of Asia*) and the legendary cosmogony.

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As the result of this Buddhist system of schools, nearly half of the male and about 3 per cent. of the female population can read and write, as compared with 9 and 0·3 per cent. for men and women respectively in Bengal. The

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24. RACING TOY BOATS.